



AMESBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Report of Entry Findings

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Superintendent of Schools

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Background Information

These findings were developed and are presented as a result of my entry plan activities over the past four months, including:

- Individual and small group interviews with students, parents, staff, and members of the community
- Review of various key documents, reports and data points
- Classroom observations, school/program visits, and attendance at various sporting and community events



Purpose of Entry Plan Process

- To enable more to learn about what makes Amesbury Public Schools unique
 - to help me gain a better understanding of the strengths and needs of the community
 - To use this information as a tool/resource in developing a comprehensive and strategic plan for continued improvement
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Student Demographics

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>
Overall Enrollment	2,832	2,613	2,424	2,280
Males	1,428	1,329	1,284	1,202
Females	1,404	1,284	1,140	1,078
African American	.9%	1.5%	.8%	3.1%
Asian	0.4%	0.8%	0.7%	1.0%
Hispanic	0.7%	1.9%	3.9%	4.8%
Native American	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%
White	97.9%	95.4%	92.4%	87.9%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander			0.1%	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non Hispanic			2.0%	3.0%
Special Education	13.9%	16.1%	15.8%	19.7%
Low Income	15.9%	13.4%	21.2%	26.3%
High Needs				32.3%
ELL	.2%	1.4%	.9%	1.5%




Organization of Findings

- Teaching and Learning
 - Fiscal and Asset Management
 - Community Engagement and Communication
 - Professional Culture
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Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning provides an indication of how the district is performing academically. Analysis in this area involved both quantitative data (such as standardized test scores, post-secondary performance, etc.) as well as qualitative data which was obtained through classroom observations as well as discussions with students, parents, educators, and community members.

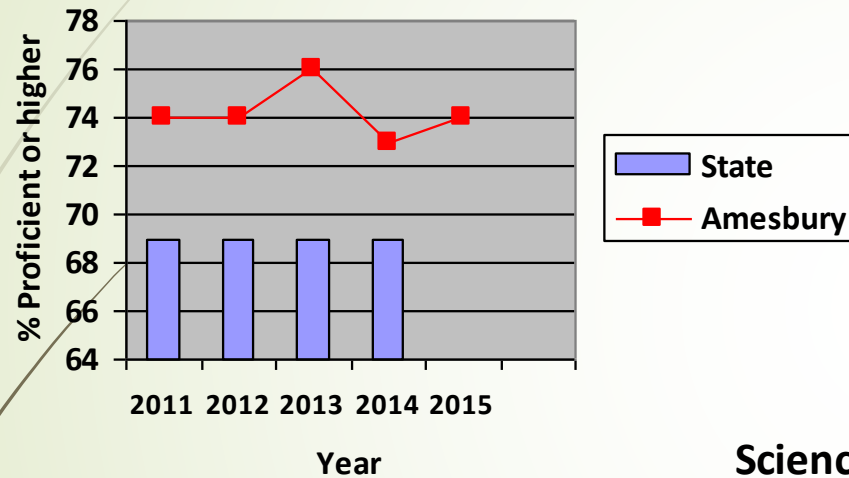


Teaching and Learning *Strengths*

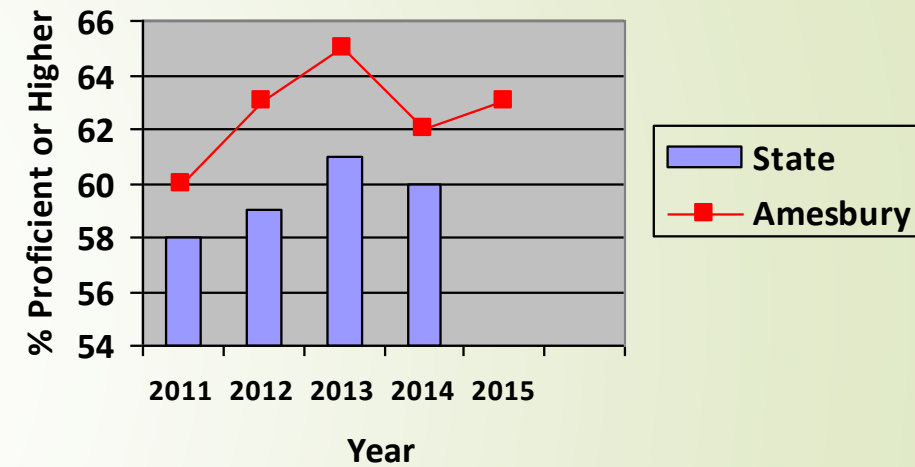
- Student performance on statewide and national standardized assessments
- Variety of club, activity and athletic offerings at the middle and high school
- Participation in the Early College High School Program
- John and Abigail Adams Scholarship
- Post-secondary preparedness
- Teaching staff
- Incorporation of 21st Century Thinking Skills

Academic Indicators - MCAS

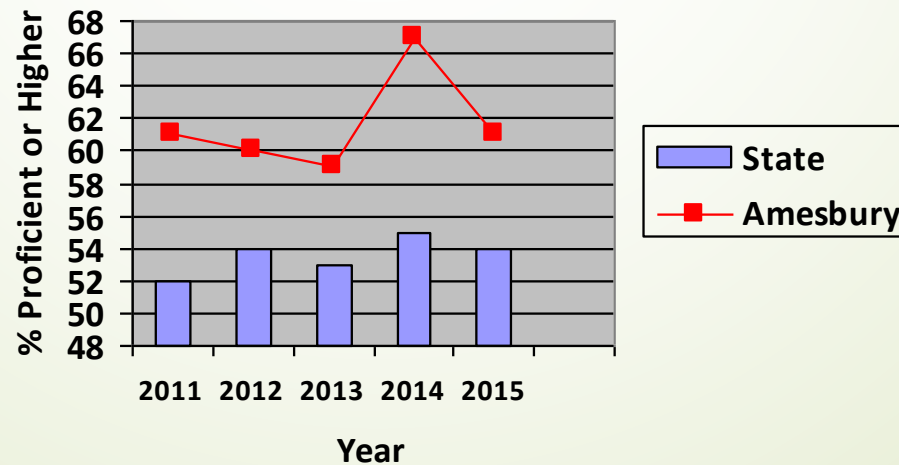
ELA MCAS Comparison



Math MCAS Comparison

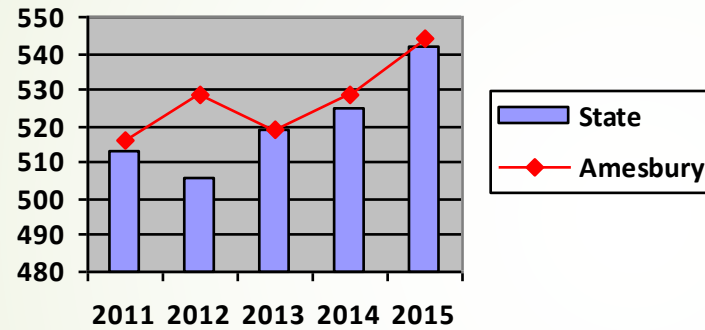


Science MCAS Comparison

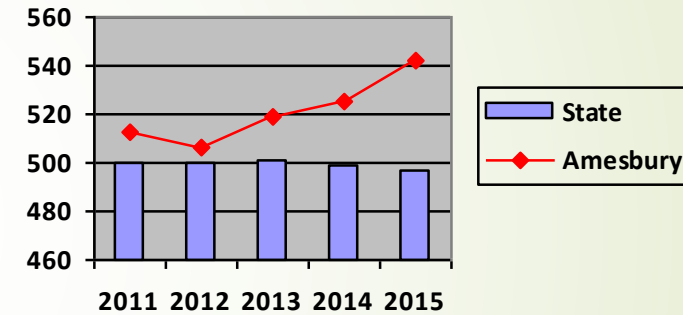


Academic Indicators - SAT

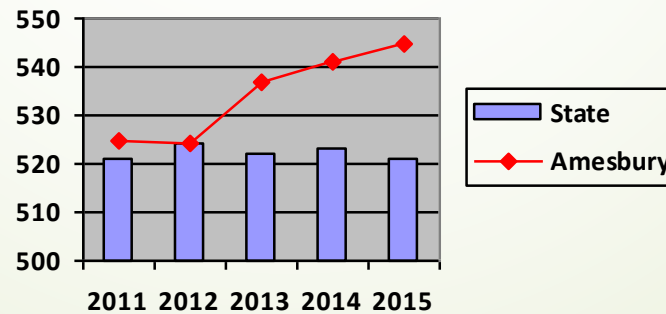
Reading



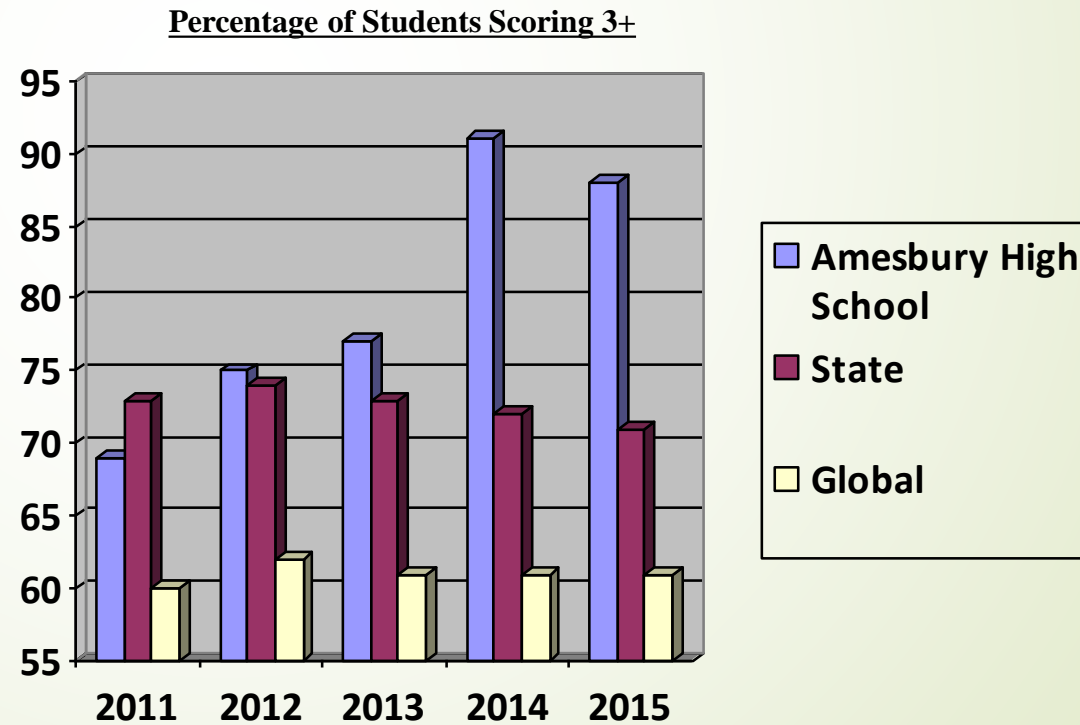
Writing



Math



Academic Indicators – Advanced Placement



Source: The College Board, 2015



Teaching and Learning *Challenges*

- Programmatic cuts
- Level of rigor of courses, particularly high school offerings
- Percentage of students receiving special education services
- Percentage of students with special needs being placed in out of district placements
- Flat English Language Arts MCAS results
- Decline in percentage of students performing proficient or better on Science/Technology MCAS
- Continued implementation of Educator Evaluation system
- Limited Response to Intervention (RtI) or Tiered Instruction models



Fiscal and Asset Management

Fiscal and Asset Management provides an indication of the financial conditions of the district in relation to the impact on student learning. This area also examines assets, such as educational equipment and facilities.



Fiscal and Asset Management *Strengths*

- Amesbury's contribution to school spending
- Grants and Foundations
- School buildings
- Connections with community service agencies to meet auxiliary student needs that impact learning
- Additions to staffing during 2015-2016 school year
- Technology capital improvements




Fiscal and Asset Management *Challenges*

- Decreases in Chapter 70 Funding
- Costs of Out of District Special Education placements – Circuit Breaker reimbursement
- Reduction in programs and staffing due to financial constraints
- Fees for services (bussing, athletics, and activity fees)
- Decreased capacity to meet needs of students of trauma
- Technology improvements
- Facility needs




Community Engagement and Communication

Family and community engagement provides an indication of the ways in which the school district outreaches to families of the Amesbury Public Schools as well as the community of Amesbury. This section includes an analysis of communication, both within the school and from the school district to families and the community.



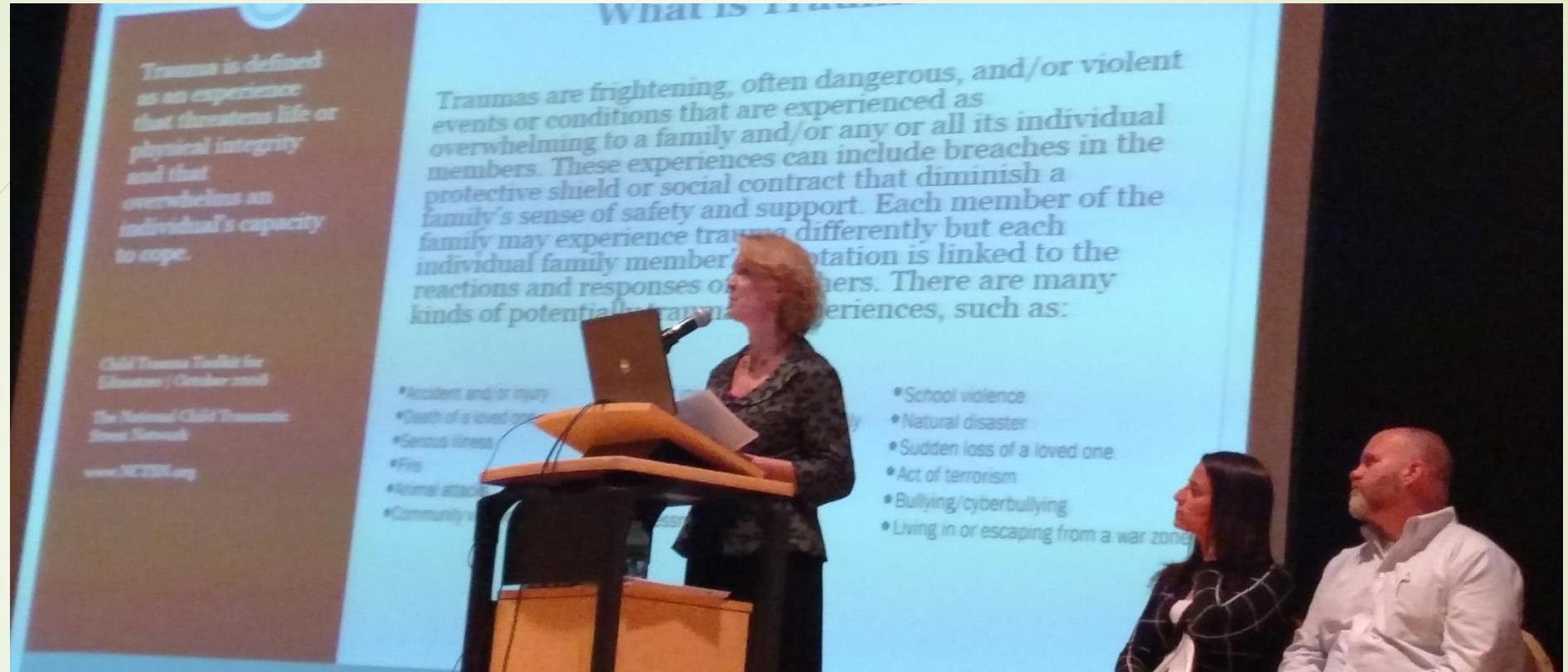
Community Engagement and Communication *Strengths*

- Involvement of the schools in the community (i.e. Senior Center)
- Relationship with local community service agencies
- Collaboration with NECC – Early College High School
- Committed School Committee
- Daily/Weekly communication
- Aspen / Blackboard Connect
- Updated Website
- Community Service



Community Engagement and Communication *Challenges*

- Limited Communication – understanding preferred modes of communication
- Continued improvement in budget process – transparency
- School Committee and City Council relationship

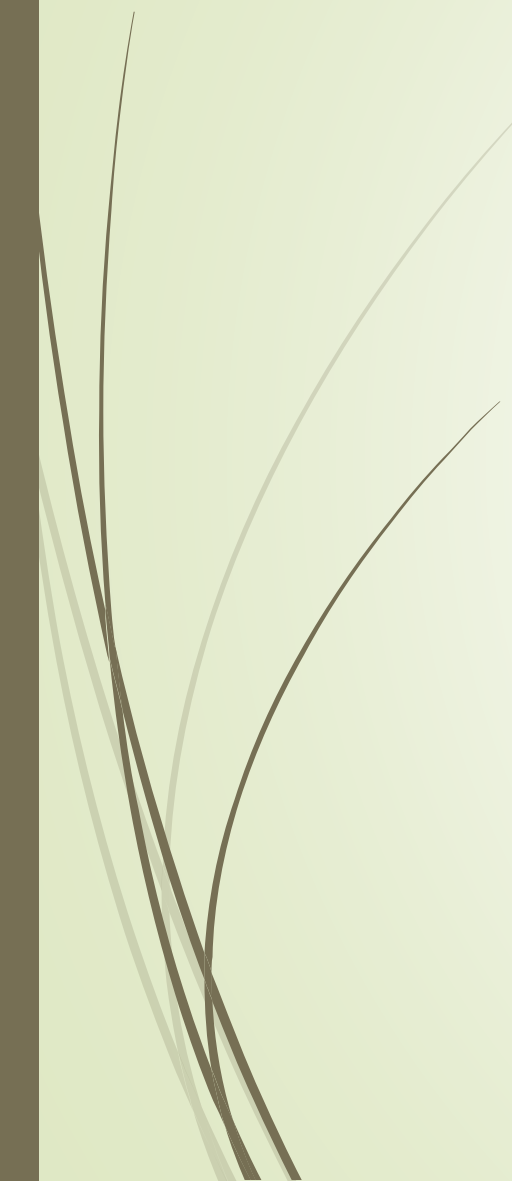


Professional Culture

Professional culture refers to the attitudes and beliefs that define the school district. A district that has a strong culture of learning, as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the educator evaluation rubric, is one in which all staff members are reflective about their practice, maintains high expectations for students and staff, and promotes continuous learning opportunities for staff members. Core values, the mission and vision of the district and schools are clearly understood and drive all decisions, both programmatically and fiscally. This belief system is shared systematically, beginning with the establishment of the values at the district level and then funneling down to the school and teacher level with values, mission and vision that are clearly aligned with the district. Further, professional culture is defined as a district that understands and appreciates cultural diversity and respects and fosters individual differences.



Professional Culture *Strengths*

- Dedication and commitment of staff
 - Pride in being part of Amesbury Public Schools community
 - Inclusion of students with diverse needs
 - Clearly defined and articulated mission statement
 - Fostering High Expectations of students
 - Reactivation of Professional Development committee
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Professional Culture *Challenges*

- Time for collaboration
- Concerns about school mascot – Amesbury Indians
- Unclear vision and core values
- Lack of strategic plan
- Fostering high expectations of students
- Limited professional development opportunities

Next Steps

Engage Stakeholders in...

- 'Vetting' the findings with administration, staff, students and parents
- Developing SWOT from findings
- Identifying Emerging Priorities
- Completing Root Cause Analyses
- Identifying 'Key Levers' – 3-5 Strategic Objectives
- Developing 3-5 Strategic initiatives for each objective

